

Proud History

Editor, *Duxbury Clipper*:

The following letter was sent by Robert Enemark of Hornbeam Road to "Better Homes & Gardens Magazine."

I just finished reading your March 4 article on the Caliendo's home in Duxbury. Such a nice job that they did in decorating and renovating this home.

A very interesting sideline to this story which was missing is the fact that after being a bank building, this house became the office of the French Atlantic Cable Co., a company which had landed an ocean telegraph cable running from Brest, France to St. Pierre at Michelin Island (off the coast of Nova Scotia) and thence to Duxbury. This was the first transatlantic cable to land in the USA and the year was 1869. The Caliendo's home was the Cable Station's office until the early 1950's, when it was shut down and moved out. A few artifacts survived which were removed by workers such as carpenters and plumbers when the house was sold for residential use.

Some of these artifacts were used to set up an exhibit of the French Cable Station at the

King Caesar House in Duxbury, just around the corner from the Caliendo's home along Duxbury Bay on King Caesar Road.

When the cable from France was landed in July 1869, it was pulled across the back river marsh to a boat landing on Cove Road and then down a thousand feet or so to the old bank building. That day, there was a large celebration on Abrams Hill that brought politicians and visitors from all over Massachusetts for the occasion.

While the first transatlantic cable to North America landed in Canada in the mid 1860's, the French saw opportunity for good profits in a cable to the USA which would not go through Canada, otherwise tariffs would cut into those profits.

The French later extended their cables to Eastham, and to Orleans on Cape Cod, with a direct cable going to the Orleans station in 1898. Today, the French Cable Station on Cove Road in Orleans stands as one of the best examples of the earliest ocean telegraph station with working equipment, in an original office building.

Robert Enemark